A

LETTER

FROM A

P---M---E in I---L---D,

TO A

CERTAIN GREAT MAN, &c.

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CERTAIN GREAT MAN, &c.

TO A

BRITISH MUSEUM

P---N---R I---L---D,

A PERSON

LETTER

TO A

LETTER

A

LETTER

FROM A

P**M**E IN I**L**D

TO A

CERTAIN GREAT MAN,

WHO

WAS OUT OF TOWN

ON THE

FIRST OF AUGUST LAST.

I am distressed for thee my brother Jonathan; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

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Where may be had, just imported from Ireland, in two volumes octavo, price eight shillings in boards, THE PATRIOT MISCELLANY, a Collection of Political Essays, published during the administration of the Duke of Dorset.

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A

LETTER, &c.

My L---d,

I Have met with an obſervation in ſome French author (in the Abbé de St. Real, if I miſtake not) that fondneſs for anecdotes, is a natural inſtinct in the mind of man. In my apprehenſion, it would be

much more proper to ſay that a propenſity to ſcandal is a natural inſtinct in man. This turn of mind, my L---d, has diſcovered itſelf more particularly with regard to perſons who have unfortunately expoſed themſelves to public cenſure, whether their miſcarriages may have been owing to their miſconduct or adverſe fortune. The hiſtory of France affords us an inſtance of this of ſo very odious and ſhocking a nature that I ſhould not care to blot my paper with it if it did not tend to prove, in the moſt forcible manner, the execrable

influence

influence of the monſtrous depravity in queſtion.

A certain engineer having received ſentence of death from a court-martial for miſbehaviour, the affair became a common topic of converſation in all companies. It happened once to be canvaſſed in a numerous circle when one preſent ſaid that he was inclined, by his natural diſpoſition, to pity whoever lay under the preſſure of misfortunes, but that, with regard to the perſon who was then the ſubject of converſation, he could not help

ſhutting up his bowels of compaſſion from him, having heard particulars concerning him that, if true, proved him to be a diſgrace to the human ſpecies. Being urged to explain himſelf, he, after heſitating a long time, at laſt informed the company that the perſon under ſentence was remarkable for having one of the moſt corrupt and vitious taſtes that ever was known in any man, if ſuch a wretch deſerved that name, for that the firſt perſon's excrement he met with was to him the greateſt delicacy imaginable.

This

This ſtory, my L--d, ſhews to what a flight men carry their cenſorious malice. I ſhould make an apology for relatings did not I know you poſſeſſed of a fund of philoſophy and good ſenſe, which place you above that frivolous delicacy which takes umbrage at a truth that, though it may contribute to enforce and illuſtrate a truth, may be in ſome meaſure ſhocking to nice ears. You know, my L--d, that in a court of juſtice the judges make no ſcruple of uſing the moſt indecent expreſſions and liſtening to the moſt obſcene relations when

the

the cauſe requires it; and I make no doubt but you are too reaſonable to take umbrage at my ſaying what, if I could poſſibly ſuppreſs in writing to you upon the preſent ſubject, I would never utter, as well through a regard to the dignity of my own character as with a view of conforming myſelf to that delicacy of ſentiment of which I know you poſſeſſed.

But to return to my ſubject: An unhappy experience, my L--d, has proved too evidently that the practice already taken notice of is not peculiar to the French: alas!

too

too many ſad examples prove that our countrymen are as apt as they to heap additional obloquy on thoſe who are already labouring under popular reproach. When the late unfortunate Admiral B---g had made that miſcarriage which afterwards coſt him his life, and even when the rigorous execution of the ſentence paſſed againſt him ſhould have allayed the violence of popolar animoſity, the moſt ſcandalous reports were ſpread concerning him in public, and met with almoſt univerſal credit. It was confidently affirmed that that unfortunate gentleman

tleman and his brother had ſome years ſince kept a young fellow between them for the moſt infamous of purpoſes.

My L---d, I muſt once again apologize to your l------p for ſpeaking in ſuch terms, but your l------p undoubtedly knows that caſuiſts are agreed that thoſe who ſpeak of flagitium, adulterium, peccatuin obominandum, ſhould not be accuſed of obſcenity, as they repreſent thoſe covered as it were with a veil of horror, quia iſla crimina ab illis exhibentur tanquam quodam horroris tegu-

mento

mento obvoluta. But, to return to our ſubject.

I apprehend, my L--d, that it is ſcarcely neceſſary to bring arguments to refute this idle and ridiculous calumny. How can any man of common ſenſe conceive that, if this reproach had been well-grounded, no one would ever have thought of making it till after the ill-ſucceſs of the admiral?

This malignant propenſity which men have to overwhelm thoſe who are already ſinking under a load

of affliction, cannot, in my opinion, be more aptly compared than to what we obſerve amongſt horned cattle. When one of theſe happens to fall into a ditch, the reſt, with united efforts, labour to plunge their fellow as deep as poſſible into the mire. Every lover of humanity will undoubtedly be grieved at ſeeing his fellow-creatures diſplay, in ſo conſpicuous a manner, a diſpoſition which diſhonours even the brute-creation. The Yahoes of the celebrated Swift ſeem in this particular to be ſuperiour in point of humanity to thoſe animals who aſſume

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the name of rational. The unhappy admiral is not the only perſon who has undergone this atrocious calumny. Every body knows that a late miniſter who, though his conduct might have been exceptionable in other reſpects, never gave any grounds to a ſuſpicion of this nature, has been moſt cruelly and unjuſtly traduced for what the French call Non-conformité en amour. Perhaps he may have been impeached upon ſome preſumption as weak as the Duke of Clarence was by his brother Edward IV. who cauſed him to be impriſoned in the Tower

becauſe his name began with C, upon a prophecy by which it was foretold to him that a perſon whoſe name began with that letter ſhould dethrone him.

Perhaps our modern politicians may have reaſoned in the ſame manner, and, becauſe the name of the miniſter in queſtion begins with an F, have concluded that a B ſhould be annexed to it, as F's and B's go together in the French language, and are both equally proſcribed in the company of ladies.

My

A My L--d, it would be deviating from my ſubject to launch out into critical enquiries. My buſineſs at preſent is not to anſwer the trifling cavils of word-catchers, but to expoſe and ſtigmatize a public failing, a failing by which the reputations of many honourable and worthy perſonages have been made the objects of calumny and detraction. It was this propenſity of the public to believe on the worſt ſide that encouraged thoſe villains who ſome years ago made an execrable attack upon the character of Mr. W----e and other perſons of rank to ſet their

infamous

infamous profecution on foot. A profecution as abominable as unjuſt, which would have brought an indeliable ſtain upon the characters of thoſe gentlemen had not the worthy Mr. Worſdale, inſpired by a laudable zeal for the cauſe of injured innocence, detected the horrid machinations of thoſe villains by a ſtratagem which will undoubtedly meet with the approbation of every friend to Virtue.

In the feigned character of counſellor Johnſon he acquired their confidence, offering to ma-

nage

nage the proſecution himſelf, and having thus come to the knowledge of their ſecrets, was afterwards the principal inſtrument in bringing about their conviction.

It were to be wiſhed that injured virtue could always find ſuch honeſt and zealous aſſerters of her cauſe: but, alas! ſuch is the infatuation of the public, that the moſt idle reports, when calculated to villify and traduce, are received in this age (which, however, does not ſeem to be overſtocked with faith) with the utmoſt eagerneſs, and implicit-

ly

ly believed upon the slightest grounds.

It is an opinion almost universally received amongst the vulgar, that every man who discovers any symptoms of timidity in an engagement has a turn to the most odious and unmanly of all vices. When poor, abused captain N-r-s, through meer absence of mind, happened to pass two or three hours in his cabin at a time when some over-officious tars thought it his duty to fight the enemy, a report was soon after propagated equally groundless and unjust.

Because

Becauſe the captain happened to have a young ſurgeon on board whoſe complexion was of a remarkable delicacy, his features ſtrikingly beautiful and his ſhape elegant; the ſailors like undiſcerning brutes, would fain have it that he ſerved aboard in ſome other quality beſides that of ſurgeon. This rumour found credit too eaſily with the malicious town, ſuch is the pronenels of men to believe falſe witneſſes that depoſe againſt their neighbours. My L--d, it would be ſuperfluous for me to produce any more inſtances, to prove how lightly and

inconſiderate the public gives credit to the moſt falſe reports when calculated to gratify their malignity. I flatter myſelf that thoſe already produced will be ſufficient to conſole you in ſome meaſure for the injurious calumny which you have had the misfortune to labour under. When you reflect that ſo many excellent perſons could not eſcape the tongue of calumny, you will bear the load of detraction with greater patience and reſignation. It is a juſt obſervation of one of the antients, my L--d, that grievances are alleviated by the number of ſuf-

ferers. Solaman miſeris ſocios habuiſſe doloris. But if the number of the accuſed ſhould be a matter of conſolation to your l---p, ſurely their quality ſhould be much more ſo, and your l---p cannot be ignorant that many of the moſt renowned perſonages of antiquity have labour-ed under the ſame calumny and ſuffered the ſame aſperſions with yourſelf. Socrates, Plato, Xenophon, Julius Cæſar, Auguſtus, and the immortal Maro could not eſcape them.

Since perſonages ſo renowned for their virtue and abilities have been ſo ſeverely treated by the prophane and liberal cenſurers of antiquity, thoſe of the moderns who are ſet up to view by their rank and placed in a conſpicuous point of light ſhould not flatter themſelves with the hopes of eſcaping the blaſts of calumny. Has not party-malice, my L--d, ſhed her venom upon the ſpotleſs reputation of that truely chriſtian hero King William the third of glorious and immortal memory. The Duke of Portland and the Earl of Albermarle, be-

cauſe

cauſe raiſed from the condition of pages to their high ſtation, and honoured with his majeſties higheſt favour, have been beſpattered in the moſt infamous manner by writers of the tory-party. The celebrated Swift, who was as ready to raiſe and propagate ſcandal as any hireling ſcribbler for or againſt a miniſter, has done his utmoſt to corroborate theſe infamous inſinuations. In his account of an extraordinary perſon, lately come amongſt us, a piece remarkable for nothing but it's wretched quibbles and indecency; he is thought to have an eye to the

two noblemen above-mentioned, when he ſays, that many courtiers have been ſuppoſed to owe their preferment to the perſon in queſtion. In his Gulliver's travels he has another fling at king William, and when ſpeaking of the errors which hiſtorians are often guilty of in drawing the characters of the great, he ſays, that they have often been ſo far overſeen as to aſcribe chaſtity to ſodomites. Hiſtorians however are by no means liable to err on the favourable ſide, on the other hand, it is cuſtomary with them to lay the moſt atrocious crimes

to the charge of thoſe whoſe hiſtory they write. Thus Bayle, whoſe chief view ſeems to have been to gratify his reader's paſſion for ſcandal upon the authority of hiſtorians, perhaps as ill-informed as himſelf, charges that excellent perſon Leo 10th (for notwithſtanding the errors of his perſuaſion we ſhould do juſtice to his merit) who is entitled to the gratitude of every lover of learning, for having been the chief inſtrument in reſtoring it with the moſt abominable of crimes, a crime the very mention of which is enough to ſtain paper

and

and ſhock all modeſty. In fine, he charges him with having had an infamous commerce with the pages of his bed-chamber. Nothing can be weaker than charges of this nature, quia ſunt crimina (as Barclay ſays) qua facile ab accuſatoribus fingi & fæcile ab accuſatis negari poſſunt. But alas! my L--d, it is with the moſt poignant grief I am obliged to add myſelf to the liſt of ſufferers by this cruel imputation. Could infernal malice ever have deviſed a more black and horrid accuſation, an accuſation, which to one of my function appears more ſhocking than

that

that of any crime whatſoever, not excepting even murder itſelf. This crime, my L--d, for which, in foreign countries, delinquents are burned alive, is repreſented in ſcripture as the moſt heinous and flagitious of all crimes. It was this that drew down the immediate vengeance of Heaven upon the ſeven cities guilty of it; and it is ſpoken of in terms that ſhew it to be the peculiar object of the wrath divine.

Your L----p cannot be ignorant upon what ground I have been aſperſed thus cruelly: my

having formerly travelled into foreign countries has given riſe to theſe ſcandalous rumours; from the ſame ſource have ſprung thoſe unjuſt reflexions thrown out againſt your l——p: upon ſuch a baſis has the immenſe ſuperſtructure of calumny been raiſed. It ſhould be ſome conſolation to us, my L—d, that theſe ſcandalous reports concerning both of us was firſt propagated in Ireland, whoſe ſoil is prolific in weeds of all ſorts, but none ſprouts up in it more frequently, or thrives better, than detraction. It was ſaid of Dublin, by a perſon of condition, that

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it was a place of the leaſt ſin and the moſt ſcandal of any in Europe. In my character, of head of the church, I can by no means agree to the firſt part of this aphegm; but, as an individual, I have ſadly experienced the truth of the latter. The envy which my being promoted to the higheſt dignity of the church had raiſed againſt me, undoubtedly gave occaſion to the animoſity which, finding no other way to manifeſt itſelf, broke out in infamous and execrable falſhoods.

Your l——p's innocence is likewise evidently proved by a circumſtance of the like nature. It was not till you had given umbrage to the ſp--k--r and his party in parliament, by ſteadily adhering to your own, and warmly promoting the meaſures of the court, that recourſes were had to theſe low and contemptible expedients to vilify and render you odious.

It is thus, my L--d, that men often meet with cenſure when they deſerve praiſe, and to diſcharge their duty is imputed to them as a crime.

I have often been ſurpriſed, my L—d, at the readineſs with which reports of this nature are received. I have ſometimes been inclined to think that they look upon an accuſation of this kind as including ſomething of the marvellous, and give it a favourable reception for the ſame reaſon that they are inclined to credit the moſt improbable ſtories of ghoſts and apparitions. A ſtrong propenſity to credit things ſtrange and uncommon is inherent in the minds of men, who are never better pleaſed than when they hear ſomething to make them ſtare.

I am aware, my L--d, that no perſon of ſenſe or diſcernment has ever given any credit to theſe groundleſs and idle reports; that they become current amongſt the vulgar alone, whoſe approbation and diſapprobation are equally unworthy of regard. Tacitus has admirably characteriſed obſervers of this kind by the appellation of Vana Mirantes, perſons that gape and expreſs the higheſt admiration at things ſtrange and incredible.

I am convinced, my L--d, that the ſenſible part of mankind de-

ſpiſe this idle and malicious turn of the public; ſuch impotent attacks of malice never did, or ever can, hurt any man's character.

From what has been ſaid, my L--d, it follows that the diſcourſe of a ſet of empty pratlers in a coffee-houſe, or of a club of drunken ſots at an ale-houſe, ſhould always be overlooked with contemptuous neglect by perſons of rank and quality. Nothing can be more juſt, my L--d, than the obſervation of Horace,

Interdum vulgus rectum videt, eſt ubi peccat.

My

My L--d, I am ſorry to find that your conduct upon a late remarkable occaſion has unhappily expoſed you to public cenſure, and that thoſe who inveigh againſt you ſupport their aſſertions by ſomething more than hear-ſay and reports propagated amongſt the vulgar and ignorant, who are ready to believe every thing they hear if calculated to gratify their malice. I ſincerely wiſh, my L--d, that the laſt mentioned reports may prove as falſe and groundleſs as the firſt. Though the opinion of the public, with regard to the affair of the firſt of Auguſt, is not

meerly founded upon oral tradition, though it ſeems to be in ſome meaſure, countenanced by authentick intelligence. It will, I hope, be no hard matter for your l----p to refute it, and vindicate your public character to the ſatisfaction of the public. It is with the utmoſt concern, my L--d, that I find ſo many pamphlets have been already publiſhed concerning you, tho' it is evident theſe were compoſed by a parcel of ſtupid, inſignificant, hireling ſcriblers, who, though utterly incapable of forming a judgment of your conduct,

and deſtitute of proper information, write in their garrets to earn a few ſhillings, may, it is much to be feared, prejudice the public againſt you, and I am ſorry to ſay, my L--d, that it is at preſent by no means prepoſſed in your favour.

But, my L--d, I am wandering from my firſt intention, which was not to conſider your public conduct, but to offer your l---p ſome topick of conſolation, as antedotes againſt the poiſon of ſlander and calumny. I am ſenſible that it is very difficult

to

to bear undeſerved obloquy, and very-provoking to be the victim of wanton malignity. I am not ignorant that it is the hardeſt thing imaginable, for the ſoul to bear up againſt the attacks of virulence and malice; the ſoul when left to herſelf upon theſe occaſions, is in the ſame ſituation with a veſſel that drives at the pleaſure of the wind and tide; this is a ſeaſon in which friendſhip becomes an indiſpenſable duty: in fine, ſuch a ſeaſon as this is the touch-ſtone, whereby to diſtinguiſh true from counterfeit friendſhip. Since no-

nothing can be more juſt than that obſervation of a claſſick author,

Donæ eris felix multos numerabis amicos
Tempora ſi fuerint nubila ſolus eris.

I was then reſolved, my L--d, not to be wanting to the duty of a friend in this ſeaſon of affliction. Not that I would by any means be underſtood to inſinuate that you are a victim to ſorrow, or that you are not able to ſupport yourſelf in your preſent affliction: all thoſe who know you will acknowledge that you are not wanting in fortitude, and that you look

look down with contempt upon the ſenſeleſs clamours and tumultuous cries of the populace. Your ſentiments upon this head I approve of from my heart. It would certainly be viſionary and weak in a great man, to regulate his conduct with a view to

Jene ſcais quel amour
Que le hazard nous donna & nous ete en unjour.

For ſurely, my L--d, it would be very ill-judged to exert one's abilities, and make painful efforts to acquire the eſteem of a people, who ſo lightly believe

ſuch

ſuch reports as have already been mentioned to the prejudice of thoſe who lead armies in their defence.

My L--d, it gives me the higheſt pleaſure imaginable, to hear that you are come home, ſuch a ſtep ſeems almoſt ſufficient to vindicate your late conduct, and I have good hopes that you will meet with the ſame reception that Varro met with from the Romans, when he brought back the ſick, wounded, and ragged remains of his army, from the battle of Canna;

where,

where, when this conſul return-ed to Rome after the overthrow, occaſioned by his miſconduct, and the death of his collegue Paulus Æmilius, contrary to whoſe advice he had engaged, the ſenate and people came out to meet him, and returning hearty thanks, quia non de ſalute reipublicæ deſperaſſet, con-ducted him to his houſe with ac-clamations of joy.

You, my L--d, have un-doubtedly a claim to a much more honourable reception; for the Roman conſul had by his

temerity

temerity and indiſcretion cauſed the total defeat of his army; but you, with a caution and prudence worthy of the wiſe Fabius, brought off the troops entruſted to your care without the loſs of a ſingle man. Tis well known, my Lord, that England has been too often the dupe of her allies; that ſhe has often expended millions, and expoſed thouſands of brave fellows in the field, in the cauſe of allies, who, to uſe a vulgar expreſſion, have made a cat's paw of her.

But

It muſt therefore be acknowledged highly laudable in you to have preſerved her troops from danger where there were ſuch ſtrong reaſons to believe that they were to be ſacrificed in order to ſcreen thoſe of the Germans. I have indeed, heard it urged by ſome cenſorious perſons that this is much the ſame excuſe that was given by Admiral B--g, who declared that he could not have attempted to ſuccour Minorca without endangering the loſs of the fleet. But the caſes are by no means parallel, and I make no

doubt, but the objections made to your conduct for not engaging will upon enquiry, be found as idle and groundleſs, as the aſperſions caſt upon both of you by the ignorant and undiſcerning populace.

The Engliſh, my L—d, reſemble the Carthaginians in many reſpects. England is now the firſt maritime power in Europe, as Carthage was formerly; but it is to be hoped that our countrymen have, by a long intercourſe with the French, acquired ſo much of their politeneſs that they

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no longer reſemble the Carthaginians in one reſpect. So rigid and ſevere was the temper of theſe Africans, that, when ever they loſt a fort of any conſequence, or were worſted in an engagement, the firſt thing they did was to hang their general. This is a procedure which muſt certainly be diſapproved of by all that have any ſenſe of juſtice and humanity. But, ſuppoſing even that the practice of Carthage in this reſpect ſhould be approved of amongſt us, Who can pretend to ſay that your l---p ever occaſioned the loſs of a battle. It is well

known

known that Prince Ferdinand gained a compleat victory on the firſt of Auguſt, and, as your l---p was preſent upon the occaſion, you you have an undoubted claim to a ſhare in the glory of conquering. My L--d, I ſincerely wiſh that you may be able to ſilence all your malicious detractors and refute their calumnies to the ſatisfaction of the public and the joy of your friends, amongſt whom, my L--d, none is more ſincerely your well-wiſher, than,

My L--d,

Your L---dſh--p's,

Moſt obedient humble Servant.

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